

What is claimed is:

1. A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through the read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of

5 reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;

monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;

10 sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;

obtaining optimum read technique data corresponding to the item;

15 comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;

providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the data reader includes a plurality of windows through which the symbol may be read, wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises
20 determining through which window the symbol data was obtained.

3. A method according to claim 1 wherein the data reader
is a scanner that produces a plurality of scan lines to read the
symbol data, wherein the step of monitoring reading technique
comprises determining which scan line was used to read the
5 symbol data.

4. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of
monitoring reading technique comprises determining a distance
from the data reader to the symbol when the symbol data was
10 obtained.

5. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of
monitoring reading technique comprises determining a length of
time that the symbol was present in the read volume before the
15 symbol was successfully read.

6. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the
step of assembling a plurality of data pieces to obtain the
symbol data, wherein the step of monitoring reading technique
20 comprises determining how many data pieces were assembled to
obtain the symbol data.

7. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of determining whether an EAS tag on the item has been deactivated.

5 8. A method according to claim 1 wherein the evaluation system comprises a PC-based training system.

9. A method according to claim 1 wherein the evaluation system comprises a POS terminal.

10 10. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises displaying feedback data on a training system monitor.

15 11. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises broadcasting an audio message.

12. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises displaying feedback data in graphical form via a visual feedback indicator.

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13. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of recording the read technique data for subsequent analysis.

5 14. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of obtaining optimum read technique data comprises accessing a lookup table containing predetermined optimum read technique data corresponding to the symbol data.

10 15. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises detecting reading motion of the item via a plurality of triangulating cameras.

16. A method of scanning wherein an operator passes an item through the scan volume of a scanner while moving the item across a weigh scale integrated with the scanner, comprising the steps of

5 scanning a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data;

obtaining a dynamic weight of the item as the item is moved across the weigh scale;

10 obtaining optimum dynamic weight data for the item from a lookup table containing item weight data corresponding to the symbol data;

15 comparing the dynamic weight of the item to the optimum dynamic weight data to determine an extent of lifting performed by the operator;

providing data regarding the extent of lifting to at least one of a training system and a monitoring system.

17. A method according to claim 16 further comprising the step of scanning a plurality of items, wherein the step of obtaining a dynamic weight comprises calculating an average
20 dynamic weight of the plurality of items.

18. A method according to claim 17 wherein the step of comparing the dynamic weight of the item to the optimum dynamic

weight comprises comparing the average dynamic weight of the plurality of items to a predetermined average dynamic weight standard.

5 19. A method according to claim 16 further comprising the step of monitoring scanning technique with the scanner to obtain scan technique data.

10 20. A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of:
 producing a weight pulse having a duration equal to a length of time that the item is present on the weigh scale;
 and
 determining a scan point within the weight pulse at
15 which the item was scanned.

20 21. A method according to claim 20 further comprising the step of determining whether rescanning of the item has occurred based on the position of the scan point within the weight pulse.

 22. A method according to claim 20 further comprising the step of determining a rate at which the item is moved through the scan volume based on the duration of the weight pulse.

23. A method of training a scanner operator to use proper scanning technique, comprising the steps of

providing a pre-selected group of items having symbols
5 encoded with symbol data;

scanning the symbols one at a time;

monitoring scanning technique to obtain scan technique
data;

10 sending the scan technique data to a scanning evaluation
system;

obtaining optimum scan technique data corresponding to the
symbol data;

15 comparing the scan technique data to the optimum scan
technique data to determine an effectiveness of the scanning
technique;

providing feedback data indicating the effectiveness of the
scanning technique.

24. A method according to claim 23 further comprising the
20 step of moving an item across a weigh scale during scanning,
wherein the step of monitoring scanning technique comprises
obtaining a dynamic weight of the item as the item is moved
across the weigh scale.

25. A method according to claim 24 wherein the optimum scan technique data includes optimum dynamic weight data for the item.

26. A method according to claim 23 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises displaying the feedback data via a multimedia PC-based application.

27. A method according to claim 23 further comprising the step of recording the scan technique data.

28. A method according to claim 23 further comprising the step of sending the scan technique data simultaneously with item identification data to the scanning evaluation system.

29. A method according to claim 23 further comprising the step of determining whether an EAS tag on an item has been deactivated to determine an effectiveness of the scanning technique.

30. A data reading system for reading symbols on items scanned by an operator, comprising

a housing;

a data reader disposed in the housing for reading a symbol
5 on an item, and for obtaining symbol orientation data and symbol movement data during operator scanning;

a processor integrated with the data reader for processing the symbol orientation data and the symbol movement data, and for determining an effectiveness of a scanning technique;

10 feedback means in communication with the processor for providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique.

31. The data reading system of claim 30 further comprising
15 a weigh scale integrated with the data reader for obtaining a dynamic weight of the item during scanning.

32. The data reading system of claim 30 wherein the
feedback means comprises a visual feedback display located on
20 the housing.

33. The data reading system of claim 32 wherein the visual feedback display comprises a module removably mounted on the housing.

5 34. The data reading system of claim 30 further comprising a camera for monitoring motion of the item during scanning.

10 35. The data reading system of claim 30 wherein the feedback means comprises a printer for printing a scanning technique report.

36. The data reading system of claim 30 wherein the feedback means comprises a video monitor for displaying scanning technique data.